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UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002310

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
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CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
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ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: SPECIAL ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

All media reported that President Shimon PeresQ Facing Tomorrow
Conference will open in Jerusalem tonight. U.S. Ambassador to the
U.N. Susan Rice, EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, and Quartet

envoy Tony Blair are expected to attend.

Major media (lead story in HaQaretz) reported that today at a special meeting, the security-diplomatic cabinet is likely to discuss whether Israel should establish a commission of inquiry into the findings of the Goldstone report. HaQaretz reported that both the Justice Ministry and Foreign Ministry support establishing such an inquiry, holding that it would aid Israel in combating the report. HaQaretz reported that DM Ehud Barak, for his part, does not rule out such a probe but does not want it to harm the standing of Israel's existing investigative bodies and the IDFQs own prosecutors. HaQaretz reported that yesterday PM Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to lawmakers from his Likud party that Israel would ensure that the report be vetoed at the U.N. General Assembly. Maariv quoted an Israeli diplomatic source as saying that the process constitutes a Qslippery slope.

Leading media reported that an American scientist, who had worked in the U.S. Department of Energy, Pentagon, and NASA, was arrested yesterday on charges of attempted espionage for Israel. However, no actual Israeli involvement is alleged. (Major media quoted senior GOI officials as saying that Israel does not spy in friendly countries.) The suspect, Stewart David Nozette, 52, from Chevy Chase, Maryland, was arrested yesterday by the FBI and charged with attempted espionage for knowingly and willfully attempting to communicate, deliver, and transmit classified information relating to the national defense of the United States to an individual that Nozette believed to be an Israeli intelligence officer. Nozette is expected to appear before a Washington, D.C. court today. If convicted, he is expected to receive the maximum penalty allowed by law -- a life sentence. Nozette had worked for the National Space Council and, later, the Department of Energy. He had a special security clearance, allowing him access to, among other matters, information specifically relating to nuclear materials. The affidavit submitted to the court states that on September 3, Nozette was approached by a man who led him to believe he was an Israeli intelligence officer. The man, however, was an undercover agent for the FBI. During the phone call, Nozette agreed to meet the man later on the same day. At the meeting, which took place at a Washington hotel, Nozette allegedly told the agent of his access to top secret information and his possession of a high-ranking security clearance, which allows access to information received from American satellites. He is alleged to have told the undercover officer he would be willing to answer specific questions in exchange for money.

Following some further meetings, the FBI twice transferred sums of money for classified information, which Nozette allegedly provided. The exchanges were documented by the FBI. The FBI agent who contacted Nozette pretended to be an Israeli officer due to early information indicating Nozette was interested in selling secrets to Israel.

Yediot reported that the Juniper Cobra exercise, which will start in the next few days, QworriesQ Syria and Iran. Leading media reported that Israel conveyed reassuring messages to neighboring countries. HaQaretz reported that Charles F. Wald, former Deputy Commander of United States European Command (USEUCOM), told participants at a conference this weekend in Washington organized by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy that the U.S. would find it difficult not to join an Israeli air strike in the event that Jerusalem decides to strike Iran's nuclear facilities.

HaQaretz quoted an unnamed officer on the IDFQs General Staff as saying that the extremist fringe of West Bank settlers is growing. The officer blamed individuals Qformerly in position of power, who are now unemployed and setting up all kinds of committees,Q for fanning the flames of radical sentiment among settlers. He did not name names, but top army officials suggested he might be referring to former Kedumim Mayor Daniella Weiss.

HaQaretz reported that yesterday the Defense and Interior Ministers agreed to appoint a task force to facilitate construction in the West Bank. A similar team, which was responsible for establishing the ownership of West Bank lands, operated until about three years ago under the auspices of the IDFQs Civil Administration. Officials were quoted as saying that the team's work is essential to issuing building permits in the West Bank. DM Barak and Interior Minister Eli Yishai made the decision at the request of West Bank settlement leaders. HaQaretz quoted Interior Ministry sources as saying that

the task force was meant to remove bureaucratic obstacles.

All media reported that yesterday Knesset Member Daniel Ben Simon announced his resignation as Labor faction chairman after only five months, dealing another blow to party chairman Ehud Barak. Ben Simon said he was not joining the four Labor "rebels" at this point.

However, he no longer saw himself bound to coalition discipline and would act as a one-man faction, he said. The former HaQaretz journalist blasted Barak's policies at a news conference yesterday, saying, "The man heading Labor is responsible for the [West Bank] outposts and I cannot accept that." Labor failed to achieve its goals vis-a-vis the peace process and "should not be in the coalition," he said.

HaQaretz reported that the Defense Ministry will reduce by 30% the number of the members of its delegation in New York.

The Jerusalem Post cited the belief of officials at the Israel Water Authority that if this winter is as lacking in rainfall as the last one, by next summer Israel will have to take drastic steps such as importing water and setting up portable desalination plants.

Yesterday HaQaretz reported that the Interior Ministry has confirmed the contents of a leaked internal report, which states that since launching operations in July, its Oz task force has been responsible for the deportation of 700 illegal migrant workers and the voluntary exit of 2,400 more. The Jerusalem Post quoted human rights organizations as saying that the statistics in the report prove that negotiation and discourse are more effective than arrests, but that the intimidation caused by Oz's activities are a major motivator for the voluntary exits. Oz officials chose to say that the numbers proved that their intensive activities work. The Jerusalem Post reported that roughly 50 residents of south Tel Aviv demonstrated in the Hatikva market on Monday evening, calling on the government to implement its policies regarding the deportation of illegal foreign workers. The protest called on PM Netanyahu and his cabinet to stand firm on the decision to deport illegal migrants and not back down in the face of "leftist and media-driven propaganda."

The Jerusalem Post reported that senior Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki told the newspaper that PA President Mahmoud Abbas has suffered a serious blow to his standing versus Hamas in recent weeks, but that he should be able to recover that ground. Recently reported surveys show Abbas having lost support to Hamas PM in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh, with each of them now commanding the support of about 16% of the Palestinian public, as opposed to a month earlier when Abbas could boast twice that figure. However Shikaki was quoted as saying that despite Abbas' setback, "this is only temporary" and that Abbas "can overcome it long before the elections," currently scheduled for 2010. Shikaki, who was speaking on the sidelines of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy's fall conference, said that Abbas had faced similar challenges to his popularity -- notably during the IDF's campaign against Hamas in Gaza last winter -- and still rebounded.

The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday a representative of the State Attorney's Office told the Knesset Law Committee that the Government has paid hundreds of millions of shekels in damages to Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza for harm caused them by the IDF during military operations since the first Intifada. The committee met to continue its discussion of a government-sponsored amendment to the 1952 Civil Wrongs (Liability of the State) Law that would further restrict the rights of Palestinians to sue the state. The bill has already been amended twice. However, the second amendment was struck down by the High Court of Justice on the grounds that it disproportionately favored the interests of the state vis-a-vis the rights of Palestinian civilians whom the state is obliged to protect.

Maariv and Israel Radio reported that a Nigerian refugee who sought a permanent visa in Israel gave as a reason for his being persecuted the fact that he had kidnapped and killed five Americans. The Israeli authorities transferred his case to Interpol.

HaQaretz praised the design of the new American International School in Even Yehuda.

I. Mideast:

Block Quotes:

I. "What Do We Care about Justice?"

Liberal columnist and television anchor Ofer Shelach wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/20): QThe truth is that the only morality that has always been our guiding light was our own morality, which is based on a concept of survival. Israel sees itself as a ghetto outpost, the last bastion against constant and harsh existential threats. And when the tyrant is always at the gate and the pogrom around the corner you pick friends and rivals based only on their utility. The only moral yardstick is who is a Qfriend of IsraelQ and who isn't. The denial of the Armenian Holocaust (and how can we call this a Holocaust, there is only one Holocaust and it is exclusively ours), or at least avoiding any mention of it, is a practical policy practiced by Israel for many years by right wing and left wing governments alike.... There are many more examples. It could also be said, with complete justification, that morality, in international eyes, is relative and that no country truly acts based on it. The U.S. preaches to the entire world, but it has been connected with oppressive and benighted regimes when this serves its interests. And here is another point for thought: ultimately, those who act without any considerations of morality also suffer in practice. The arguments of those who said that our relationship with South Africa was not just morally problematic but would also cause us damage (Yossi Beilin was among the first of the politicians to say this) fell on deaf ears. Today we are remembered in the new South Africa, and in other parts of that continent, as having stood by the side of the despised regime. The problem is not our relations with Turkey. These too will fall into place, ultimately, because of self interest. The problem is our consciousness, which from year to year, shrinks to a harsh point of whining and self pity. The problem is that we've lost our insight, which was once to be taken for granted even if we didn't always follow it, that the pretension of being a light unto the nations and a moral role model is a source of strength, perhaps the most important source, and that if we are not moral, we will weaken and lose.

II. "The Goldstone Mission vs. the Peace Process"

Deputy Foreign Minister Daniel Ayalon wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (10/20): QAfter taking the tangible risk of leaving contested territory for the sake of advancing peace, Gaza was turned into a lawless enclave of Hamas-led, Iranian-backed terrorism. Yet, when Israel was forced to defend itself, the world reacted not with support and understanding, but with accusations of Qcrimes against humanity.Q Damned when they do and damned when they don't, Israelis are now asking themselves QWas the sacrifice worth it?Q While Israelis consider their options, the Goldstone snowball is threatening to gain momentum. From Geneva, the issue has now been passed to the U.N. General Assembly in New York for further action. But, it is still not too late. An international rejection of the HRC's [Human Rights CouncilQs] treatment of the Goldstone report would signal to the Israeli public that the world indeed supports its compromises toward peace.

III. "Barak Is Not a Partner"

Labor Party Knesset Member and former HaQaretz columnist Daniel Ben Simon, who quit the chairmanship of his partyQs Knesset faction yesterday, wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (10/20): Q[Ehud Barak told me last week:] QYou don't understand who we're dealing with. We made [the Palestinians] a lot of offers, but they refuse to enter negotiations.Q I reminded him that we had yet to remove even a single outpost. What message does that send to the Palestinians? Why should they believe us while the hammers at the settlements and outposts don't stop pounding for a minute? Is this the way to help a U.S. president full of good intentions advance a genuine peace effort? I was left without any comforting answers.

12. Iran:

Block Quotes:

"Ambush in Baluchistan"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (10/20):
QPlainly, the realm where espionage, ethno-nationalism, narco-terrorism and Islamist ardor meld is frustratingly murky . For all we know, Jundullah may indeed have links with al-Qaida, the Pakistani Taliban, and even Western intelligence -- just as Iran claims. What matters most at this stage is that Sunday's attack has drawn needed attention to the Revolutionary Guards -- also known as the Pasdaran. Founded in 1979 to protect the revolution, some of its charter members had received training in Palestine Liberation Organization camps in Lebanon. Over the years, the IRG metastasized from a Praetorian Guard to an evil empire in its own right.... The Guards is not just the glue that holds the regime together; it is its nucleus. Abbas Milani of Stanford University theorizes that the Guards' power may now exceed that of the supreme leader.... What should inform the international community as it tries to negotiate with Iran is that its QgovernmentQ is in reality a sophisticated criminal syndicate. For Iran's essential character is reflected not only in the theocratic visage of Khamenei and the mad-hatter mug of Ahmadinejad but, more revealingly, in the shadowy role of the Guards. The sobering reality of what lies at the core of the regime ought to impel the civilized world, led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Barack Obama, to act with all deliberate speed to stop the Iranian bomb. Not only for Israel, but also because this twisted regime is a menace to its people, its neighbors, the region, and beyond.

CUNNINGHAM